

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A method of forming fine patterns comprising: covering a substrate having photoresist patterns with an over-coating agent for forming fine patterns, applying heat treatment, wherein the heat treatment is performed at a temperature that does not cause thermal fluidizing of the photoresist patterns on the substrate, to cause thermal shrinkage of the over-coating agent so that the spacing between adjacent photoresist patterns is lessened by the resulting thermal shrinking action, and removing the over-coating agent substantially completely by way of bringing thusly treated substrate into contact with a remover solution for over 60 seconds.

2. (Original) The method of forming fine patterns according to claim 1, wherein the over-coating agent contains a water-soluble polymer.

3. (Original) The method of forming fine patterns according to claim 2, wherein the water-soluble polymer is at least one member selected from the group consisting of alkylene glycolic polymers, cellulosic derivatives, vinyl polymers, acrylic polymers, urea polymers, epoxy polymers, melamine polymers and amide polymers.

4. (Original) The method of forming fine patterns according to claim 1, wherein the over-coating agent is an aqueous solution having a solids content of 3 - 50 mass%.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2 wherein the over-coating agent further contains a water-soluble amine.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the over-coating agent contains a non-amine based, water-soluble organic solvent.

8. (New) The method according to claim 2 wherein a water soluble surfactant is added to the water soluble polymer.